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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Leader's Guide

The Basic Home Management module uses the following fact sheets:

- House Cleaning and Clutter Control
- Frequency of Cleaning
- Suggestions for Household Cleaning Schedule
- Establishing a Household Work Schedule (A Chart to Be Filled in by Participant)
- Whose Job Is It? (A Chart to Be Filled in by Participant)
- Household Cleaning Products
- Cleaning Kitchen Surfaces
- Cleaning the Refrigerator
- Cleaning a Refrigerator That Isn't Self-cleaning
- Cleaning the Cooktop
- Cleaning a Conventional Oven
- Cleaning the Microwave Oven
- Cleaning Toilets
- Cleaning Tubs and Showers
- Bathroom Sinks and Counters
- Cleaning Floors
- Cleaning Windows and Mirrors
- Air Conditioner Maintenance

- Furnace Maintenance
- Controlling Clutter
- Controlling Clutter in Children's Rooms
- Controlling Closet Clutter
- Controlling Paper Clutter
- Maintaining a Clutter-free House

Education instruments are included to measure progress toward the following objectives:

- A: Participants will become aware of their need for basic living skills related to home cleanliness.
- B: Participants will determine which of these basic skills they want to acquire or improve and they will develop and implement a plan to achieve these skills.
- C: Participants will increase their competencies in maintaining their homes.
- D: Participants will report improvement in their home maintenance activities.

Administering the self-evaluation forms to determine teaching strategies and assess the results of the learning:

- Ask participants to fill out the two self-evaluation sheets headed *Evaluating My Need To Know More About Home Maintenance* and *An Assessment Of How My Home Maintenance Activities Affect My Family's Health and Well-Being*. These should be filled out before any lessons are implemented.
- Then ask the participants to fill out the self-evaluation sheets, *My Plan For Improving My Skills* that relate to the areas they indicated they want to improve. For example, if a participant indicated on the first form that it was important for her to know more about keeping the bathroom clean, ask her to fill out the sheet called *Cleaning the Bathroom* and list goals and plans for achieving goals.
- If the participants indicate that they would attend workshops, use the lesson plans that follow to give the lessons most needed. Alternatively, give the participants the fact sheets to read on their own if they indicate that they prefer to use that learning strategy. Except for Lesson 1, the lessons do not need to be given in any particular order.
- Six months after the lessons, ask the participants to again fill out the form, *An Assessment of How My Home Maintenance Activities Affect My Family's Health and Well-Being*. Compare the answers on this instrument to the answers the participants gave on this same instrument before the lessons. Report the differences in the two assessments.

LESSON PLANS FOR TEACHING ABOUT CLEANING

Lesson 1: Discussion About Cleaning Standards, Frequency of Cleaning, Who Cleans, and What Cleaning Products to Have on Hand

These plans can be used before teaching about cleaning specific areas of the home.

- Make copies of the fact sheets *Frequency of Cleaning*, *Suggestions For A Household Cleaning Schedule*, *Establishing a Household Work Schedule*, *Keeping A Home Clean and Orderly — Whose Job Is it?* and *Household Cleaning Products*. Assemble the cleaning products suggested in the fact sheet *Household Cleaning Products*.
- Talk about how often people clean and what their standards are. Ask where participants learned about how clean a house should be — from their mothers, fathers or someone else? What kind of standards did their parents have: Should the house be spotless? Should it be clean enough to be comfortable? Were there any health concerns about cleanliness? Was clutter acceptable? Were the participants ever embarrassed about the cleanliness of the house when friends visited? Did things get lost because of the untidiness of the house? Did family members have regularly assigned cleaning chores? Were there times that there was a big push to clean up the house — what were those times?
- Emphasize that there are differing standards for cleanliness in the home and there is not one “right” standard. Use the fact sheets titled, *Frequency of Cleaning* and *Suggestions For A Household Cleaning Schedule*. Discuss what changes they would make in this schedule. Then, using the chores in that chart, ask the participants to fill out the chart, *Establishing a Household Work Schedule*. Ask them to be realistic about what chores can be tackled every day and every week. Emphasize that everyone’s charts will be different depending on their standards, the number of people in the household, and the time constraints of household members.

- Discuss how the cleaning chores were divided among household members when they were growing up. Did one person do most of the cleaning? Were children assigned regular chores? Were they paid to do them or were they expected to do them as part of their responsibility as a family member? Did they get tired of doing the same chores? How would it have worked to have rotated the chores among family members? If the participants are adults, have them think about their present households: Who does the cleaning chores now? If there is more than one family member in the household, how could the chores be divided up? At what age is it appropriate for kids to start learning how to take on some of the cleaning responsibilities? What chores are appropriate for kids of different ages? Use the worksheet, *Keeping A Home Clean and Orderly — Whose Job Is it?* Suggest that they talk to other members of the household about the jobs that need to be done and assign tasks according to the time and abilities of the household members. Suggest that they post this worksheet on the refrigerator or another visible place as a reminder. Household members can check when a task is completed. Or children could put stickers on the chart when they have completed their tasks.
- Talk about household cleaning products. Using the fact sheet, *Household Cleaning Products*, have examples of the various products. An attempt has been made to recommend products that are low in cost and can be used for multiple purposes. If participants ask about other products, recommend that they read the labels carefully and use them according to the label directions. Emphasize that cleaning products containing chlorine bleach should never be mixed with products containing ammonia — this results in a poisonous gas. Talk about storing the cleaning products so that they will be convenient but remain out of the reach of children.

Lesson 2: Cleaning the Bathroom

- Make copies of the three fact sheets, *Cleaning Toilets*, *Cleaning Tubs and Showers*, *Bathroom Sinks and Counters*.
- Discuss how frequently these bathroom fixtures need to be cleaned. There will be different standards and ideas about how often bathrooms should be cleaned. Do not give the impression that there is one “correct” standard — every week for example. Do emphasize that there are health issues associated with having clean bathroom fixtures. Bacteria and viruses can be spread from one person to another if bathroom fixtures have been contaminated. If someone in the household is ill, it may be prudent to clean the bathroom more frequently to prevent the spread of disease. Children learning to use the bathroom may “dribble” outside the toilet; in this case it is important to clean more often.
- Assemble the cleaning products that could be used to clean the bathroom — they are listed on the fact sheets. Talk about storing them in a convenient place so that they are readily available when someone is ready to clean. A convenient container might be in a plastic bucket to keep everything together. Under the bathroom sink is probably not a good place to store cleaning products if there are young children in the household.
- Although it might be helpful to demonstrate the cleaning techniques, it probably is not necessary. Everyone is familiar with bathroom fixtures so going over the main points in the fact sheets is probably sufficient.
- When talking about cleaning tubs and showers, emphasize techniques that prevent the growth of mold and mildew in the bathroom. Some ideas are to wipe down the tub or shower area after each use with a towel or squeegee, and to run an exhaust fan in the bathroom or open a window after showering to get rid of excess moisture. If mold or mildew is growing around the tub or shower fixtures, recommend using chlorine bleach mixed in water to kill the mold.
- You could also use the fact sheet, *Cleaning Windows and Mirrors* to talk about cleaning the bathroom mirror and the fact sheet, *Cleaning Floors* to talk about cleaning bathroom floors.

- If mold is identified as an issue in bathrooms, refer to the publication, *Controlling Mold Growth in the Home*, MF 2141. This publication is available on the CD-ROM Express disc and on the K-State Research and Extension Web site.

Lesson 3. Cleaning the Kitchen

- Make copies of the facts sheets, *Cleaning Kitchen Surfaces*, *Cleaning the Microwave Oven*, *Cleaning a Conventional Oven*, *Cleaning the Cooktop*, *Cleaning the Refrigerator*, and *Cleaning a Refrigerator Freezer That Isn't Self-Defrosting*.
- Discuss again the different standards for cleaning in the kitchen and how often participants think it needs to be done. Emphasize that food safety issues are important — dirty surfaces in the kitchen contaminate food. Talk about how more frequent cleaning is generally easier than having to scrub dried on or baked on food residue.
- Assemble the cleaning products needed for cleaning in the kitchen. Talk about where they would be stored and how they would be used. A box of baking soda stored near the sink is handy for sprinkling on a damp dishcloth and wiping up stubborn food residue and cleaning sinks. You can show how to make a scrubber out of nylon net — this is an activity that gives participants something to take home.
- Because many participants use microwave ovens daily, talk about how easy they are to clean if they are wiped out frequently. Discuss cooking methods that will reduce splatters inside the ovens.
- Cooktops and ovens can be difficult to clean if food residue is cooked on. Use the fact sheets to discuss methods for preventing baked-on food residue. Talk about the safe use of ammonia for cleaning ovens — do not mix with other cleaning products and ventilate the area well. If you conduct the workshop in a kitchen, you could talk about different types of cooktops and ovens and the different methods and products that would be used for cleaning them.
- Some participants may have self-defrosting refrigerators and others may have refrigerators or freezers that need to be defrosted. Discuss which kind they have and how often they need to be defrosted and cleaned. Using the fact sheets, talk about caring for the refrigerator regularly to prevent problems later — such as wiping off the rubber gasket on the door and keeping the coil free of dust and dirt. These cleaning techniques will also make the

appliance more energy efficient. If you have a refrigerator in the room, show where the gasket, the coil, and drip pan are. Caution against using sharp objects to defrost refrigerators or freezers. Recommend safe procedures for storing refrigerated food while cleaning the refrigerator.

- If appropriate, use the fact sheet, *Cleaning Floors* when you discuss cleaning the kitchen. Find out if participants have other cleaning or maintenance issues in the kitchen. Dishwashing or keeping a high chair clean could be issues. Pest control could be another issue. Refer to the publications listed under Resources to help answer questions about pests.

Lesson 4: Air Conditioner and Furnace Maintenance

- Make copies of the fact sheets, *Air Conditioner Maintenance and Furnace Maintenance*.
- It would be best to have a workshop on these topics in a home or building where the participants can see the units. If you are uncomfortable demonstrating the cleaning methods described here, ask at a hardware store for the name of a handy man, or ask a heating and air conditioning service person to assist you.
- Emphasize that the air conditioner and the furnace run more efficiently and are less likely to have problems if they are kept clean. The furnace filter is designed to keep dust out of the furnace motor; therefore, the filter should be replaced when it gets dirty. Show the participants how to check the furnace filter and how to replace it. Purchase some furnace filters from the hardware store and emphasize that residents need to purchase the right size filter for their system.
- Air conditioners can get debris in them which causes them to run inefficiently or not at all. Show the participants how to remove the debris safely — turn off the unit or unplug it first. A window air conditioner has a filter that can be cleaned and replaced. A central air conditioner should have debris cleared from around the outside unit so that air can circulate freely through the unit. The coils can be washed off with a garden hose — turn off the power to the unit before cleaning it.
- It is recommended that furnaces be checked by a service person at least every other year to ensure that they are working properly and safely.
- You could also have a carbon monoxide detector and a smoke detector on hand to show the participants. The purpose of these detectors is to wake residents and provide a warning that carbon monoxide or smoke are in the house. One source of carbon monoxide may be a malfunctioning furnace. Recommend that these be installed in the sleeping areas of the house. If these detectors have batteries, recommend that they be changed twice a year.
- Refer to, *My Home Book* for more information about heating systems.

Lesson 5: General Cleaning of Living and Bedroom Areas

- Make copies of the fact sheets, *Cleaning Windows and Mirrors and Cleaning Floors*. You could also have on hand the extension publication, *Cleaning the Home to Reduce Indoor Air Contamination*, MF 2102. This publication is available on the CD-ROM Express disc and on the K-State Research and Extension Web site.
- Assemble the cleaning products needed to clean windows and floors. Discuss how often they need to be cleaned. Cleaning windows may be an aesthetic issue and the participants' ideas on how often it needs to be done will vary. Cleaning floors is not only an aesthetic issue but also a health issue if there are children playing on the floor.
- The issue of waxing may come up when discussing hard surface floors. It may be helpful to have a bottle of wax on hand so that you can talk about following the label directions.
- Bring a vacuum cleaner and show how to empty or replace the bag that collects the dirt. If participants have family members who have allergies or asthma, you can recommend high efficiency vacuums with filters that collect nearly all of the dust from the air.
- There are other cleaning issues for people with allergies and asthma. Refer to the publication, *Cleaning the Home to Reduce Indoor Air Contamination* for recommendations on cleaning in the bedrooms of people with these problems. If participants live in older dwellings, there may be issues related to lead dust in the home. The same publication has recommendations for cleaning up lead dust.
- You may also wish to include some of the information from the fact sheets: *Controlling Clutter, Maintaining a Clutter-Free House, Controlling Paper Clutter, Controlling Clutter in Children's Rooms, and Controlling Closet Clutter*. See the recommendations in the next lesson for using these fact sheets.

Lesson 6: Controlling Clutter

- Make copies of the fact sheets: *Controlling Clutter*, *Maintaining a Clutter-Free House*, *Controlling Paper Clutter*, *Controlling Clutter in Children's Rooms*, and *Controlling Closet Clutter*. Assemble some of the items listed on the *Controlling Clutter* fact sheet. You may also wish to purchase or borrow some attractive storage boxes from the hardware or discount store — such things as under-the-bed storage boxes, plastic storage boxes with lids — both large and small, plastic units for filing papers, shoe storage containers, and so forth.
- Discuss with the participants what type of clutter they find most frustrating. Is it the paper clutter that comes from newspapers, mail, catalogs, children's papers, and so forth? Is it toys and children's games and clothes? Is it clothes that don't get picked up and put away? Is it food containers that get left around the house instead of being returned to the kitchen? Recommend that they brainstorm about how to deal with the most frustrating type of clutter first. Maybe other participants can talk about how they manage and ideas they have.
- Suggest that there may be two important steps to managing clutter: 1) establishing a place to keep things that are important to keep. This may include buying or finding some storage space or containers, and 2) establishing a system or schedule for picking things up and either throwing them away or putting them away. It will be necessary to gain the cooperation of everyone in the household so that one person does not have to take on all of the responsibility.
- Use the fact sheets to discuss some ideas for managing paper clutter, managing clutter in children's rooms, and managing closet space. Show appropriate storage boxes and items that could be used for each type of clutter. Suggest establishing a schedule for picking up toys and items in children's rooms, for dealing with mail and other papers, and for cleaning and organizing closets. Go back to the worksheet, *Establishing a Household Work Schedule* and talk about how to schedule these kinds of activities for controlling clutter.
- Go over the suggestions in the fact sheet, *Maintaining a Clutter-Free House*.

Remind the participants that people have different standards for the cleanliness or tidiness of their homes. Not all family members may agree on how to maintain their space — some children may resent being told that they have to clean up their rooms. If these older children can be involved in purchasing some attractive storage units, they may be more willing to cooperate. If the participants have small children, remind them that when children are taught to pick up their toys and clothes at a young age, it can become a habit that will stay with them as they get older. Suggest that modeling the desired behavior is important — if children see their parents picking up after themselves, they will be more likely to imitate them.

Other Resources:

- **If there are questions about controlling pests in the house, refer to these extension publications:**

- MF794 Ants
- MF772 Household Pesticides
- MF750 Boxelder Bugs
- MF 2270 Controlling Stored-Food Insects
- MF749 Crickets
- MF760 Fleas Infesting Our Pets and Homes
- NCR342 Household Arthropod Pests
- MF2115 Human Lice: Prevention and Control
- MF771 Spiders and Scorpions
- MF722 Termites
- MF1096 A Summary of Suggestions for Household Insect Control
- MF1123 Controlling House Mice

- **If there are questions about maintenance of the lawn, refer to these extension publications:**

- MF1155 Mowing Your Lawn
- MF2059 Watering Your Lawn
- MF2131 Practical Tips for Home and Yard
- MF2135 Lawn and Garden Pesticides
- MF2324 Fertilizing Kansas Lawns
- C550 All About Pruning

- **There are extension resources about water sources used in the home and septic systems for disposing of waster water. Some of them are:**

- MF871 Suggested Water Tests for Private Systems

- MF947 Septic Tank Maintenance
- EP25 Hard Water

- **Extension publications about organizing household records include:**
 - L801 Organizing Household Records
 - L776 Taking Inventory — Protecting Your Household Possessions
 - MF685 Our Valuable Records

- **An additional resource is the *My Home Book*. It has information on home maintenance both inside and outside the house.**

BASIC

Home Maintenance

House Cleaning and Clutter Control

House cleaning and clutter control have several advantages for the family:

- There may be less chance for the spread of disease during cold and flu season.
- There should be fewer problems from pests such as cockroaches and mice.
- Family members with allergies and asthma should experience fewer problems.
- There should be less risk of food-safety problems.
- Appliances will run more efficiently.
- The family should experience fewer problems with the organization of their belongings.
- Family members can take pride in their homes.



Our grandmothers said, “Cleanliness is next to godliness.” This statement implies that not keeping the house clean is somehow sinful and there is something inherently good about the time spent cleaning. With today’s busy households that include working parents and children involved in many activities, the “white glove test” from another era is no longer appropriate.

What is appropriate is that our homes be as organized as we can make them so that the little time we have at home is not spent looking for needed items. We will probably find it easier to engage in leisure activities and entertain in a home that is picked up and clean. A clean house is also a healthier environment to live in.



To help protect the health of our family members, there is some basic cleaning that needs to be done on a regular basis. Appliances that are kept clean run more efficiently saving energy and repair costs. This group of lessons is about basic cleaning: why we should do it and what is the easiest, least expensive way to do it.

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Frequency of Cleaning

How often we clean depends on several factors:

- How many people are in the household
- What activities are going on in the home
- Our standards for neatness and cleanliness



Often one person in a household will have different standards than another person and conflicts will arise about who should pick up and clean up and how often. Household members will need to work out these conflicts. A suggested cleaning schedule appears on the next page. Use the charts called *Establishing a Household Work Schedule* and *Keeping a Home Clean & Orderly...Whose Job Is It?* Talk to other household members about dividing the work in ways that are age-appropriate.

The purpose of the schedule is to provide some guidelines and eliminate the problem of excess clutter so that cleaning doesn't become an overwhelming chore. Your family may decide that some of these tasks should be done more frequently or less frequently than suggested here.

Information written by:

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SUGGESTIONS FOR A HOUSEHOLD CLEANING SCHEDULE

Daily Tasks

Weekly Tasks

Occasional Chores

Seasonal Chores

KITCHEN

Wash dishes
Wipe counter tops
Wipe out sink
Empty garbage
Sweep floor

Dispose of leftover food
Damp mop floor
Clean garbage pail
Wipe out microwave

Clean drip pans on range
Clean oven
Defrost and clean refrigerator
Wash walls and woodwork

Clean cupboards
Wax floor

BATHROOM

Wipe out sink & tub
Replace soiled towels
Empty waste baskets
Put away grooming aids

Wash floor
Launder towels
Clean toilet bowl
Wipe tile surfaces
Clean toothbrush holder
Clean mirrors
Clean sink, shower and tub

Wash throw rug
Wash walls, woodwork

Clean closets

LIVING ROOM

Clean ash trays
Dispose of papers

Straighten magazines
& throw pillows

Vacuum rugs and furniture
Vacuum or dust floors

Dust furniture, lamps
& accessories

Shampoo rugs and furniture

Wipe light bulbs

Move & clean under furniture
Wash windows & curtains
Dust books & pictures

Clean closets
Clean screens or
storm windows
Wax floors

Wash walls & woodwork

BEDROOMS

Make beds
Put away clothes

Launder bed linens
Vacuum & dust

Turn mattresses
Wash mattress covers & pads
Wash pillows
Wash walls & woodwork

Wash or dry clean
blankets & spreads
Organize closets



ESTABLISHING A HOUSEHOLD WORK SCHEDULE

Living Areas	Very Frequent Chores (Daily)	Frequent Chores (Weekly)	Occasional Chores (As Needed)	Seasonal Chores (1-2 Times a Year)
KITCHEN				
BATHROOM				
LIVING ROOM				
DEN				
BEDROOM				
BASEMENT				
PATIO				
GARAGE				
ATTIC				
OTHER				



KEEPING A HOME CLEAN AND ORDERLY...WHOSE JOB IS IT?

List 15 jobs that should be done in your home on a regular basis. List who is to do them and check when the job is done. Post for all family members to see and check off their jobs.

Job to be done	Who does the chore	When to do it	Check when done
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			

BASIC

Home Maintenance

Household Cleaning Products

There are many cleaning products on the market. However, we do not need to spend a lot of money on cleaning products. There are a few basic products that are relatively inexpensive and many of them can be used for a variety of surfaces.



Broom: Use on hard surface floors, porches and sidewalks.

Mop: Use to damp mop hard surface floors. Choose one with a sponge that can be squeezed.

Plastic Bucket: A 2- or 3-gallon bucket with a handle works well for many cleaning jobs.

Vacuum Cleaner: Vacuum cleaners are used for cleaning carpets, upholstery and even hard-surface floors.

Rags: Worn out cotton clothing, diapers, torn sheets, worn towels and washcloths all make good rags.

Toothbrush: An old toothbrush is a good tool for scrubbing hard-to-get-to areas.

Rubber Gloves: Use to protect hands from strong chemicals such as chlorine bleach.

Liquid Dishwashing Detergent: A detergent used for hand washing dishes makes a good all-purpose cleaner for many hard surfaces.



Chlorine Bleach: Bleach used for bleaching white clothes can be added to water to disinfect surfaces.

Baking Soda: Makes a good powdered cleanser that doesn't scratch surfaces.

Ammonia: Liquid ammonia is a strong cleaner used to clean ovens and cut grease. When mixed with water it cleans windows.

Vinegar: White vinegar helps remove hard water deposits. It can also be mixed with water to wash windows.

Toilet Brush & Bowl Cleaner: A commercial toilet bowl cleaner cleans and disinfects.

GETTING ORGANIZED

- Store cleaners near the place where they will be used. Toilet bowl cleaner and the toilet brush will be handier if stored in the bathroom.
- Safety should take precedence over convenience. If bathroom cleaners cannot be safely stored out of reach of children in the bathroom, store them on a high shelf in a closet or utility room.
- Set aside a shelf in a closet or in the utility room to store cleaners, brushes, rags, etc. Small items can be stored in a small basket, plastic bag, plastic trash can or in the scrub bucket. Find a convenient place for the broom, mop and vacuum cleaner. The easier it is to get out and put away cleaning equipment, the more often it will be used.

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Cleaning Kitchen Surfaces

REGULAR CARE:

- It is important to keep kitchen surfaces clean to prevent food poisoning. This includes counters, sinks, cutting boards and appliances.
- Kitchen sinks should be cleaned at least twice a week—daily is better.
- Cutting boards and counters should be cleaned after each use.
- Wipe down the outside of appliances when you have spills or see fingerprints and other grime.
- Remove the food particles from the sink strainer daily.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- *Rags*
- *Dishcloth or nylon net scrubber*
- *Baking soda or dishwashing detergent*
- *Rubber scraper or toothbrush*
- *Chlorine bleach*
- *Rubber gloves*
- *White vinegar*



TO CLEAN:

- Wet a rag, dishcloth or nylon net scrubber. Sprinkle with baking soda, then scrub the sink, counter or appliance. Dishwashing detergent can be used on the rag instead of baking soda.
- Dried on food can be removed with a rubber scraper or toothbrush.



- Rinse the surface with a rag dipped in clear water. Rinse until all of the soap or baking soda residue is gone.
- Mix one or two capfuls of chlorine bleach in a gallon of warm water.
- Wearing rubber gloves, dip rag into bleach solution and wipe the sink and counters. This can help prevent the spread of bacteria that causes food poisoning.
- After cleaning appliances, wipe off the outside with a dry, soft cloth to prevent streaks.
- If hard water spots form on faucets, pour white vinegar on a rag and wipe the faucets down. Then, wipe with a soft, dry rag.

GETTING ORGANIZED:

- Keep a box of baking soda near the kitchen sink so that it is easy to pick up and sprinkle on a dishcloth to wipe down the sink and other surfaces.
- Keep white vinegar handy if hard water deposits are a problem on kitchen faucets.

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Cleaning the Refrigerator

REGULAR CARE:

- Wipe up spills immediately to prevent them from drying and becoming hard to remove.
- The rubber gasket on the doors of the refrigerator and freezer need to be kept clean so that the door closes tightly and to prevent the rubber from deteriorating.
- When bad odors develop in the refrigerator, it usually means spoiled food. Hunt for the culprit and throw it away.
- Drip pans under refrigerators can become moldy if water sits in the pan. Clean the drip pan about every other month.
- The coil under or behind a refrigerator needs to be vacuumed twice a year to keep the appliance running efficiently.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- *Rags*
- *Dry towels*
- *Dishwashing liquid*
- *Baking soda*
- *Chlorine bleach*
- *Vacuum cleaner*



TO CLEAN:

1. Turn off the refrigerator while cleaning it.
2. Remove food and containers from the refrigerator. Throw away food that is getting old. Using a clean, wet rag or dishcloth, wipe off the food containers that are sticky. Temporarily store the food and containers in a picnic cooler or in another refrigerator while you are cleaning the refrigerator and freezer.



Cleaning the Refrigerator, cont'd

3. Remove the vegetable crispers and shelves. Put about a gallon of warm water in a crisper bin or a mixing bowl with some dishwashing detergent to make a sudsy solution.
4. Dip a rag or dishcloth in the solution and wipe down the inside of the refrigerator and freezer. Use a rubber scraper to remove dried on food. Baking soda sprinkled on the cloth makes a cleanser to help remove stubborn dirt.
5. Wipe down all the surfaces in the refrigerator including the walls, non-removable shelves, floor of the freezer, under the crispers, racks on the doors, and gaskets on the doors. Wipe down the outside of the refrigerator and the top of the refrigerator.
6. Replace the soapy water with clear water and rinse the cloth in the clear water. Wipe down all surfaces with a clear water solution until the surfaces feel clean and smooth and free of soap or baking soda residue.
7. Dry off all surfaces with a clean towel.
8. Wash the crisper bins and shelves in the kitchen sink in hot soapy water. Rinse and dry.
9. Remove the drip pan from under the refrigerator and wash in hot soapy water. Rinse with a solution of chlorine bleach and water and dry.
10. Using the vacuum hose attachment, vacuum under the refrigerator and vacuum the coils under or behind the refrigerator. If the vacuum hose will not fit or your vacuum does not have a hose, wrap a rag around a yard stick and dust coils. Wipe up spills on the floor under and around the refrigerator.
11. When the refrigerator and all components are clean and dry, replace the shelves and crisper bins, and replace the food in the refrigerator. Replace the refrigerator drip pan.
12. Turn the refrigerator on.
13. An open container of baking soda in a refrigerator helps remove odors.

BASIC

Home Maintenance

Cleaning a Refrigerator/Freezer That Isn't Self-Defrosting

TO CLEAN:

1. Turn off the refrigerator while cleaning it.
2. Remove food and containers from the refrigerator. Throw away food that is getting old. Using a clean, wet rag or dishcloth, wipe off the food containers that are sticky. Temporarily store the food and containers in a picnic cooler or in another refrigerator while you are cleaning the refrigerator and freezer.
3. If ice has formed around the coils or on the walls of the refrigerator or freezer, put pans of hot water in the refrigerator to help melt the ice. As the water cools, replace with hot water until all the ice is melted. Do not use an ice pick or knife to chip the ice — it could damage the coils or the walls of the refrigerator/freezer. Use clean towels to wipe up the drips.
4. After the ice has melted, proceed with steps 3 through 13 from the preceding *Cleaning the Refrigerator* skill page.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- Rags
- Dry towels
- Dishwashing liquid
- Baking soda
- Chlorine bleach
- Vacuum cleaner

Information written by:

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Cleaning the Cooktop



REGULAR CARE:

- Use pans that are large enough to hold the food that is being cooked to prevent food from running over and cooking onto the burners.
- Turn heat down to the lowest temperature that will continue the cooking process to reduce boil-over spills.
- If possible, cover foods that splatter as they cook.
- Wipe up spills immediately to prevent food spills from burning.
- Run the exhaust hood fan when using the range to remove grease and moisture from the kitchen.
- Keep the reflector bowls under the burners clean as they are designed to reflect heat back onto the bottom of the cooking pan. Do not line bowls with aluminum foil unless the appliance manual says it's OK. Use of abrasive scouring powders or pads will discolor the bowls over time, reducing their heat reflectance.
- Never use abrasive scouring powders or steel wool pads on any part of the cooktop as they will scratch the surface.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- *Dishcloth*
- *Dishwashing liquid*
- *Baking soda*
- *Ammonia*
- *Plastic mesh pad*



TO CLEAN:

- If you have a glass or ceramic cooktop, follow the cleaning instructions in the manual. Don't use scouring powder or steel wool pads on these surfaces. Sprinkle baking soda on a wet dishcloth to make an effective cleaner on a cold cooktop. Rinse well and dry.
- Electric burners usually burn off the food spilled on them. Heavy spills can be wiped off with a damp cloth when the burner is completely cold.
- Gas burners and grates should be removed for cleaning. Soak grates and burners in very hot water and detergent for about a half-hour if very dirty; then scrub with a brush, rinse and dry. A little ammonia may be added to the soaking solution if they are very greasy. Do not use scouring powder.
- If the holes in the burner are stopped up, clean with a fine wire, such as a paper clip. Don't use a toothpick — it could break off and clog the holes.
- Rinse burners in hot water and place them upside down to dry.
- Remove reflector bowls under burners and wash in hot suds. Soak to loosen heavy dirt or grease. Wipe off trim rings with a sudsy cloth. On stubborn spots on chrome bowls and rings, use a paste of baking soda and water with a plastic mesh pad — do not use scouring powder or stainless steel pads. Rinse and dry.
- Never put chrome bowls in a dishwasher or self-cleaning oven.
- The cooktop around the burners is made of porcelain enamel. Spills should be wiped up at once, taking care to avoid burns from heated burners. Wet a dishcloth and lay on stubborn soil to soak it off. A plastic mesh pad can be used on stubborn spots. A baking soda paste also helps remove stubborn spots. Do not use abrasive pads or scouring powders as they can permanently scratch the surface. The sides and front of the range should be cleaned in the same way.
- If possible, remove the control knobs and wash in warm suds with a cloth or brush. Rinse and dry.
- Clean under the drip pans with warm suds. Rinse and dry.



BASIC

Home Maintenance

Cleaning a Conventional Oven

(Follow directions in the appliance manual for self-cleaning and continuous cleaning ovens)

REGULAR CARE:

- Do not store items in the oven as they may melt or burn if the oven is accidentally turned on with them inside.
- Use large-enough cooking pans to avoid boil-overs.
- Wipe up spills promptly to avoid baking on.
- Do not cover floor of oven or the oven racks with foil unless the appliance manual recommends it.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- *Ammonia*
- *Rubber gloves*
- *Paper towels*
- *Newspapers*



TO CLEAN:

- Remove broiler pans and racks and soak in a sink or pan of sudsy water to which a little ammonia has been added. Never soak aluminum in ammonia.
- If necessary, you can scour oven racks with steel wool soap pads to remove baked on grease or food.
- Rinse and dry broiler pans and racks.
- Fill a small glass bowl with 1 cup full strength ammonia, place in the oven and close the door — do NOT turn the oven on. (If the odor is irritating, open a window slightly or turn on the hood fan.) Let it stand overnight, then use a spatula to loosen and remove any large pieces or debris. Wipe loosened dirt with paper towels or newspapers. Wear rubber gloves.



Cleaning a Conventional Oven, cont'd

- If necessary, rub surfaces with a suitable abrasive, such as a steel wool soap pad. Wipe off the soap with paper towels.
- Wash with warm, soapy water and rinse. Repeat the process if necessary.
- Commercial oven cleaners can be used if ovens are very soiled. Turn off the pilot light if using spray oven cleaners. Protect the surfaces around the oven with several layers of newspaper. Never spray cleaners in a hot oven. Do not spray on the oven light, electric elements or pilot light. Follow the directions on the can. Rinse well.

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Cleaning the Microwave Oven

REGULAR CARE:

- Avoid unnecessary spatters by covering dishes with lids, waxed paper or paper towels.
- Wipe up spills at once.
- Never use abrasive pads or powders on a microwave oven.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- *Dishwashing liquid*
- *Paper towels*
- *Dish cloth*



TO CLEAN:

- If the microwave has a removable glass shelf, remove it and wash in warm, sudsy water. Rinse and dry.
- Wash inside of oven with dishwashing liquid and water. Rinse and wipe dry with paper towels or clean cloth.
- Especially clean around the edge of the door and the door opening to prevent soil build-up which would prevent door from closing tightly.
- If spills are dried on, boil water in a glass cup for a few minutes. Steam should loosen the soil. Leave in the oven 5 minutes. Remove soil, wash and wipe dry.



SAFETY FIRST!

- Don't use the microwave for deep-frying, canning or heating baby bottles.
- Stay near when microwaving popcorn. Heat buildup can cause a fire.
- Don't dry or disinfect clothing or other articles in the microwave because of the risk of fire.
- Use only microwave-safe utensils and containers.
- Don't use an oven if an object is caught in the door or if the door doesn't close firmly or is otherwise damaged.
- Be sure children who use the microwave can do so safely.

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Cleaning Toilets

REGULAR CARE:

- It is important to clean the toilet regularly. Cleaning frequency depends on the number of people in the household and how careful they are.
- Keeping the toilet area clean prevents odors. It also helps to stop the spread of disease, especially if you have young children. It can control the growth of mildew, which can make your bathroom look and smell dirty.
- Do not flush cigarettes, condoms, disposable diapers or sanitary napkins. Your toilet might stop up or overflow.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- Toilet brush
- Chlorine bleach
- Commercial toilet bowl cleaner
- Rag
- Rubber gloves



TO CLEAN:

- Use commercial toilet bowl cleaner or measure 1/2 cup bleach into the toilet (do not mix toilet bowl cleaner and bleach). Close the toilet lid and let the solution soak for 10 minutes. Both toilet bowl cleaner and bleach are poisonous. Do not leave the toilet bowl unattended while either of these cleaners are being used—children or pets who drink this water could be poisoned.



Cleaning toilets, cont'd

- Wear rubber gloves and scrub the inside of the toilet with a toilet brush. Be sure to scrub under the rim.
- Flush to rinse. Let the brush drip dry in a plastic container, such as a cut off bleach bottle.
- Mix two capfuls of bleach in a gallon of water in a bucket. Wearing rubber gloves, use this solution and a rag to scrub the lid, seat, and the outside of the toilet. Rinse your rag often in the bleach water.
- Scrub the floor around the toilet to control mildew and clean up spatters.
- Be careful using a bleach mixture if you have carpet in the bathroom. A small splatter will remove color from the rug.

SAFETY FIRST!

- Store bleach and toilet bowl cleaner in a locked cupboard or on a high shelf where children cannot reach it.
- Close the lid on the toilet to prevent curious children from playing in the toilet bowl or even falling in.
- Wear rubber gloves when using household bleach.

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BASIC *Home Maintenance*

Cleaning Tubs & Showers

REGULAR CARE:

- Monthly cleaning will generally control odors and mildew. More frequent cleaning will be necessary if you take baths instead of showers.
- Removing hair from the drain after each use will keep the drain running freely and help keep the tub or shower dry.
- You can cut down on how often you need to clean the shower if you have a house rule that each person who showers wipes down the walls of the shower. After drying yourself, you can use the bath towel to wipe down the shower. Or better yet, use a squeegee made to wipe down windows.
- Likewise, if each person who uses the bathtub rinses off the “bathtub ring” and wipes out the tub after drying, you can cut down on how often you need to clean the tub.
- Run an exhaust fan or open a window after bathing and showering to get rid of excess moisture.
- Use a non-scratching (non-abrasive) cleanser on tubs and showers. Some commercial powdered cleansers will scratch the surface.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- *Baking soda or other non-abrasive cleanser*
- *Bleach*
- *Rags*
- *Toothbrush*
- *Rubber gloves*



TO CLEAN:

- Remove hair from the drain.
- Wet a rag or sponge with water and sprinkle lightly with a cleanser, such as baking soda. Scrub tub surfaces and rinse with cold water.
- To remove mildew, scrub with a mixture of 1/4 cup liquid chlorine bleach in a gallon of water. Wear rubber gloves. If the shower wall is finished with tile and grout, mildew may grow on the grout. Dip an old toothbrush in the bleach and water solution and scrub the grout with the toothbrush.
- If there are rust stains on the tub, do NOT use chlorine bleach. Bleach sets rust stains. It may be necessary to use a commercial rust remover. Follow label directions carefully.
- If the caulk around the edge of the tub is crumbled or broken, remove it carefully with a scraper. Clean and dry. Squeeze new caulk into the crack between the tub and wall. Let it dry overnight before using the tub or shower.
- If the showerhead is clogged with hard water deposits, soaking it in white vinegar helps to remove the deposits. Put 1 or 2 cups of vinegar in a plastic bag. Place the plastic bag around the showerhead so that it hangs in the vinegar. Secure the bag to the showerhead with a rubber band, string or tape. Leave in place for 1 to 3 hours. Remove the bag and run the shower. You may need to use a toothbrush to remove the softened hard water particles from the shower head openings.

SAFETY FIRST!

- Store rust remover and bleach in a locked cupboard or on a high shelf where children cannot reach them.
- Do not leave a bucket of water unattended. Curious children can pull it over or even fall in head first and drown.

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Home Maintenance

Bathroom Sinks & Counters

REGULAR CARE:

- Clean bathroom sinks at least once a week. Clean more often if needed to keep odors under control.
- Clean hair from the drain often.
- Remember that diapers and their contents can spread disease even if your child seems healthy. After bathing a baby in the sink or changing diapers on a counter, clean the sink and counter with detergent and water and follow with a bleach rinse.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- *Rags*
- *Baking soda or other non-abrasive cleanser*
- *Toothbrush or nylon net scrubber*
- *Dishwashing detergent*
- *Rubber gloves*
- *Chlorine bleach*



TO CLEAN:

- Wet a rag or sponge. Sprinkle lightly with a non-abrasive cleanser, such as baking soda, and scrub the sink. Rinse.
- Dried on toothpaste can be removed with a scraper, nylon net scrubber or an old toothbrush. Scrub counters with a rag or sponge dampened with dishwashing detergent and water.



Bathroom Sinks and Counters, cont'd

- Use a nylon net scrubber with detergent and water to remove most spots.
- Using rubber gloves, mix one or two capfuls of chlorine bleach in a gallon of warm water. Using a rag or sponge, wipe the counters and sink. Be careful about mixing dishwashing detergent with chlorine bleach—some detergent labels say, “Do not mix with chlorine bleach.”
- Using a soft cloth to dry the sink, faucets and counter helps prevent water spots.

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Home Maintenance

Cleaning Floors

REGULAR CARE:

- Use a rug or mat for wiping off shoes when entering the house. Gritty soil tracked in on shoes, wet or dry, will scratch hard surface floors and cause deterioration of carpet fibers.
- Vacuum or sweep regularly to remove dirt before it gets ground in. Even a carpet sweeper picks up dirt on the surface of a carpet if used before dirt is ground into the carpet.
- Wipe up spots and spills on floors immediately. On carpet, blot the spill, but DO NOT rub.
- Treat stains on carpet immediately.

CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

- *Dishwashing detergent*
- *Mop or rag*
- *Bucket*
- *Broom*
- *Vacuum*



TO CLEAN HARD SURFACE FLOORS (Vinyl, tile or hardwood floors):

- Vacuum, dry mop, or sweep the floors to remove loose dirt.
- Use lukewarm water and dishwashing detergent to create a sudsy solution. Dip a mop or rag in the water and squeeze it out. Rub the floor only enough to remove dirt.
- Rinse the soap solution off by dipping the rag or mop in clean water and re-wiping the floor.
- If the floor has layers of wax buildup, it will look yellowed. Removing the wax requires harsher cleaning than ordinary cleaning and should be done no more than once a year.



- Commercial cleaners are available for removing wax. Follow the directions on the label.
- You can make a wax remover with 1/2 cup ammonia and 1 cup laundry detergent in 1 gallon warm water. Test in an inconspicuous area to see if it softens the wax film. Spread some of the solution on the test area and after several minutes, the area where the solution has been applied should turn cloudy and soften. Scrub that area with a stiff brush to loosen old wax. Repeat the process in another area until the floor is completely stripped of wax. Rinse the floor with clean water. After the floor has dried, apply one or two light coats of wax, drying thoroughly between coats.
- Do not use wax remover on vinyl no-wax floors if they still have the original finish on them.

TO CLEAN CARPET:

- Vacuum thoroughly and often to remove imbedded dirt. Go over each section with the vacuum nozzle several times.
- Eventually, carpet needs some type of cleaning to remove soil that sticks to the fibers. There are a number of products available on the market: absorbent powder, foam, shampoos, and hot water or steam extraction. Each has their advantages and disadvantages. Before using a carpet cleaner, vacuum thoroughly.
- Pretest a product in an inconspicuous area before using. Check to make sure the test area has not changed color.
- Protect the carpet from rust stains by putting aluminum foil or plastic wrap under furniture legs until carpet is dry.
- Follow the cleaner and equipment instructions.
- Do not overwet the carpet. Remove all of the cleaning product-residue left in the carpet makes the carpet soil more quickly. Dry the carpet as quickly as possible.
- Keep mechanical action to a minimum to avoid carpet damage.

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Home Maintenance

Cleaning Windows & Mirrors



CLEANING PRODUCTS NEEDED:

TO CLEAN:

- Commercial glass cleaners are available, but are more expensive than making your own cleaner. There are several “recipes” for making your own window cleaner: 1/4 cup ammonia diluted in 2 quarts warm water is a good cleaner for soil and grease. 1/4 cup vinegar diluted in 2 quarts warm water helps remove hard water deposits. 1/2 cup ammonia and 2 cups rubbing alcohol mixed in 1 gallon of water makes a good heavy-duty glass cleaner. A spray bottle is handy for applying the solution.
- Before washing the glass, wash the sills and cross pieces of the window first.
- Start at the top of the window or an upper pane so that the dirty solution does not drip on already-washed glass.
- Spray the window with one of the solutions above, or dip a rag into the solution and wash the window. Wipe dry with a lint-free cloth, paper towels or crumpled newspapers.
- To prevent streaking, wash windows out of direct sunlight (the solution dries too quickly).
- When polishing, use up-and-down strokes on one side of the window and side-to-side strokes on the other side to show which side has streaks and needs additional polishing.

- *Commercial glass cleaner or ammonia (see recipes at left)*
- *Rags*
- *Paper towels*
- *Newspapers*
- *Spray bottle is handy*

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BASIC



Home Maintenance

Air Conditioner Maintenance



Window Air Conditioners

Window air conditioner filters should be cleaned at least once a year. The filter traps pollen, dust and dirt to keep them out of the air conditioning unit. If the filter gets clogged, you won't get maximum-cooling performance.

- Unplug the appliance and remove its front grill.
- Remove the filter and wash it thoroughly with warm soapy water. If the filter has deteriorated, replace it. Your local appliance or hardware store should be able to supply the exact size and type of replacement filter you need.

Make sure to seal the area where the window closes on top of the air conditioner. The gap left by an improper seal is energy inefficient and allows bugs into the house. Appliance stores sell kits called Air Conditioner Window Foam. These are foam strips with peel-and-stick backing.

Winterize your window air conditioner at the end of the summer. With stay-in-place units, close the vents to keep out cold air. If you leave it in the window, wrap it in plastic and seal with duct tape, or buy an air conditioner cover. If you take the appliance out of the window, be careful not to bend or damage the cooling fins on the back. Don't store the air conditioner on a garage floor — it could come into contact with corrosive de-icing salts that can drip off car tires.



Central Air Conditioners

Before using the central air conditioner in the spring, follow these simple maintenance tips to avoid unnecessary repairs and extend the life of the air conditioner:

- Turn the electrical switch to the OFF position.
- Remove leaves, sticks and other debris that surround and cover the outside unit.
- Flush the coils clean with a garden hose. Direct the hose from the top of the unit and force the water outward toward the sides of the unit.
- Turn the electrical switch back to the ON position.

Any time during the cooling season that storms blow debris into the air conditioner unit, repeat these steps. Trim plants away from the unit that could block the flow of air around the unit.

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Furnace Maintenance

Your furnace has one or two filters that clean the air that circulates through your home. When the filter gets dirty, less air can get through the filter and your furnace has to work harder. Changing the furnace filter lets the furnace run more efficiently. Families differ in the activities they engage in, the number of children in the household, whether they have pets, and the kinds of materials (such as carpet) they have in the home. All of these things affect how quickly the furnace filter gets dirty.



- Check the furnace filter once a month and change it when there is a visible accumulation of dirt and lint. You can get filters at hardware and building supply stores. Be sure to buy the right size (take an old one with you to make sure). Keep some extras on hand for convenience.
- To change the filter: Turn off the furnace or air conditioner at the thermostat.
- If there is a door to the unit, open it or remove it.
- Remove the dirty filter. Check for any clips that are holding the filter in place.
- Pull out the filter carefully, keeping the dirty side up.
- Replace the filter with one the same size.
- Replace any clips, close or replace the door to the unit, and turn the furnace system back on.



SAFETY FIRST!

- Have the furnace and air conditioning system checked by a contractor once a year. This check-up will help prevent a problem with carbon monoxide poisoning, will ensure that your furnace is running efficiently, and will detect any problems that need repair.
- If you smell gas in your house, leave the house immediately and call the gas company from a neighbor's home.
- Kansas requires a smoke detector in each dwelling unit. Install one or ask your landlord to install one on the ceiling next to the bedrooms. Test the unit every few months to make sure it is still working. If it has batteries, replace the batteries twice a year. You need to be able to hear the alarm from the smoke detector when you are asleep in a bedroom.
- A carbon monoxide detector is another safety feature to protect your family from carbon monoxide poisoning. Install one near the bedrooms (it does not need to be on the ceiling), so that the alarm will wake family members while sleeping.

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Controlling Clutter

When clutter gets out of control, you waste space, time and energy.



How often do you waste time looking for things because you didn't put them away? Is your closet overflowing, but you can't find the item you want? Are your kids' toys and hobby materials so jumbled that they can't enjoy them? Have you missed paying a bill on time because you lost it? Getting control of clutter can seem like a huge task. However, we feel much more in control of our environment when we don't have to spend time looking for things that we know "are here somewhere." Breaking down the job of clearing the clutter into small tasks is easier to do than convincing yourself to take on the grueling job of sorting, putting away, and cleaning everything in one weekend.

Clutter often accumulates because we don't have a place to store things. Or, maybe we have too many things. Controlling clutter requires that we make some decisions and get organized. It *will* be worth it!

ITEMS YOU NEED FOR STARTING THE JOB:

- Boxes—both large and small
- Garbage bags
- Attractive bags or baskets
- Files, folders or large envelopes
- The commitment to start the job

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Controlling Clutter in Children's Rooms

Mom, where is my ball glove? I forgot my homework and got another detention. Do I have a clean uniform for the game today? Helping children get organized and eliminate the clutter that keeps them from finding their possessions will help free up your time and energy.



IDEAS FOR ORGANIZING YOUR CHILDREN'S BEDROOMS AND PLAYROOMS AND REDUCING CLUTTER:

- You are the best model for the behavior you desire from your child. If you pick up after yourself, your child will learn to do so also. Teaching a child at the youngest possible age to maintain a neat and orderly room is the groundwork for many of the habits they will pick up in later years. It all starts with teaching them to put away a toy after its use.
- Storage for items such as toys, children's school projects, hobbies and sports equipment must be EASY TO USE. Plan storage that is easy to reach. Large toy boxes and chests are not as easy to keep organized as other types of storage. Use many small stackable boxes — preferably see-through boxes for storing toys with small parts. Boxes that are not transparent can be color-coded for easy identification. For example, boxes with blue dots contain puzzles, green dots are for blocks, red dots for action figures, pink dots for dolls.
- Open storage or shelving is best for younger children. If their toys are in view, they will use and enjoy them more and can see where to put them away. Stacking storage cubes (simple boxes left open on one side) can be piled up against a wall. Plywood, particle board, plastic cubes or wire baskets offer endless arrangement possibilities.



- A brightly colored file cabinet in a child's room or play room is a great place for storing school work, pictures, cards, awards and certificates, art projects, report cards and other treasures.
- In the child's closet, place closet rods low enough for the child to reach without climbing on a stool or chair. Rods that are approximately 30 inches from the floor are ideal for preschoolers. Large hooks are handy for coats and smocks.
- Consider shelves in the closet for storing folded clothes, rather than using dressers. Upper shelves can be used to store out-of-season clothes, items that should be used under supervision, out-of-season sports equipment, and toys that are display items.
- If you use dressers, drawers should be within easy reach of children's hands and equipped with stops so that the drawer cannot be pulled out onto the child.
- Every few months, sort through toys with the child, letting him or her help decide what to keep in the room and what to put on an upper shelf in the closet for awhile. Then when the stored toy is brought out again in a few months, it will be like having a new toy.
- Pack up, give away or sell toys that your children have outgrown.
- Make sure there is a wastebasket and a laundry basket or hamper in the child's room. Expect the child to use both of them and have him or her empty the wastebasket into the garbage can every week. You may also want to have your children bring their laundry to the laundry room on a designated day.
- Designate a shelf or shoe rack for shoe storage.

Let your child know what your expectations are for picking up his or her room. For example, no TV until clothes are put away and the bed is made. Then, make sure that it is easy to meet these expectations with convenient storage.

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Home Maintenance

Controlling Closet Clutter

Your closet is overflowing but you can't find what you want to wear. Belts are jumbled together. Winter clothes are mixed with summer clothes. Shoes are in a heap on the floor. The chest of drawers is stuffed full. Dirty clothes are in a pile on the floor. What to do?



- Bring several boxes or garbage bags with you to the bedroom.
- Empty the contents of the closet, shelves and chest of drawers.
- Sort the items in into six piles:
 1. **Things to keep and wear now**
 2. **Things to keep and wear next season**
 3. **Things to throw away (put in a garbage bag)**
 4. **Things to give away (put in a box or bag)**
 5. **Things to sell (put in a box or bag)**
 6. **Things to recycle (put in a box or bag)**
- If you haven't worn an item during the last year, it may be time to throw it away, give it away, or sell it. Are you really going to lose enough weight to fit into it again?
- Make some money from items that are still useful. Take them to a consignment shop or have a yard sale. If you don't have enough of your own things to sell, ask a friend or neighbor if they have items they would also like to sell. It may pay to advertise bigger items (like coats) in the paper.



Controlling Closet Clutter, cont'd

- Some items can be recycled into rags for use at home—old t-shirts, underwear, torn items, etc.
- Give items you don't need to a charity so that someone else can get some good out of them.
- Items that you will wear next season should be cleaned and put away in a dry place. Wash or dry clean these clothes and hang them in another closet (if available) or store them in a chest, boxes or bags in an out-of-the-way space. Do NOT leave them in your closet.
- Organize hard-to-store items like belts and scarves. Hangers can be purchased which are made for storing belts, or they may be stored in a shoebox on your closet shelf. Belts can also be hung on the same hanger with the pants or skirts you wear them with.
- See-through storage boxes make it easy to find the right scarf or accessory.
- Use shoe boxes or shoe storage bags to put shoes into so that pairs stay together and off the floor of the closet.
- Keep a laundry basket or hamper handy so you aren't tempted to throw dirty clothes on the floor of the closet.
- Put the clothes you are wearing this season back on hangers, shelves, or into the chest of drawers.

Feel good about how much space you have and how easy it is to find things.

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BASIC

Home Maintenance

Controlling Paper Clutter

Every day the mail comes with ads, catalogs, bills...and sometimes letters. Kids bring school papers and projects home. Newspapers and magazines pile up. Before long, one or more tables or counters gets piled high with paper clutter.



TO TAKE CONTROL OF PAPER CLUTTER:

- Designate a file (such as an accordion file), a set of folders, or large envelopes to store paper items that you need to keep.
- Label one folder “bills to be paid this month.” Check it every week to make sure that bills due that week are paid. When they are paid, mark the stub with the date paid and move it to the next folder.
- Label the next folder as “receipts.” Store the stubs from paid bills in this folder.
- Another folder should be labeled “family records” for important credit card information, insurance policies, family health records, bank statements, a household inventory and tax records. Keep it near the telephone.
- Another folder can be labeled “things to read.” This can contain items such as newsletters, letters or invitations from friends. Make a commitment to read the items in this folder, take action on them (post dates from newsletters on your calendar, answer a letter, respond to an invitation, etc.), and then discard them.
- When you bring in the mail or when your children bring newsletters or notices home from school and club meetings, look at the items quickly if you don’t have time to read them carefully now. Do not put them down in a pile — put the items in the appropriate folders and commit to reading them later in the evening or the next day.



- Immediately throw away advertisements and junk mail you don't want—do not put them in a pile.
- Sort through old catalogs and magazines and throw them away, give them away, or recycle them. Catalogs and magazines that come in the mail can be put aside for reading later, BUT, for every catalog or magazine that you save, decide that an old catalog or magazine must be discarded—and do it! Designate a box or garbage bag for collecting magazines and catalogs. Store the box in the garage, basement or utility room. When the box is full, take the items to the recycling center, give to a friend or charity, or throw them away. Don't let it overflow!
- Decide about children's projects that are displayed on the refrigerator — for every new one that goes up, an old one comes down. Let your child help decide what comes down. If it's a project that needs to be saved, put it in a storage box with other projects. This might be stored under the child's bed or in a closet. Otherwise, throw the item away.
- Designate a space for homework or projects-in-progress. Enlist your child's help in choosing this space so that homework doesn't get lost, torn or chewed on by the dog.
- Put newspapers in the recycle bin after reading them. Cut out coupons or articles you want to keep (if you're a coupon saver, make a folder or envelope for coupons). Unread newspapers more than two days old should also go into the recycle bin.

Congratulate yourself on getting organized and for the clean counter space that can now be used to DO things rather than PILE things!

Information written by:

*Marilyn Bode, Extension Housing Specialist,
Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS*

BASIC

Home Maintenance

Maintaining a Clutter-Free House

Now that you have eliminated all the clutter and organized the things you want to keep, you need a plan so clutter doesn't accumulate again.



- Deal with things when they are in your hand (throw them away or put them away) or keep a basket handy to hold things that need to go to another room. Do not put them in a pile.
- Spend a few minutes every day on a quick pick-up. Take a basket and go through the house quickly, picking up and dropping things off where they belong. Do not use this time to do heavy cleaning or you'll get bogged down.
- Set limits on things to keep. How many margarine tubs do you need? How many old magazines will you read again? Give away or recycle the extras.
- Keep a shopping bag in every closet for items that you are ready to get rid of. When the bag starts to get full — recycle, discard, sell or give away the items.
- If some items need to be taken up or down stairs to store, do not let them pile up at the top or bottom of the stairs. Put a box or basket near the stairs for temporary storage and take the items with you when you go up or down.
- When you leave a room, take a quick look around to see if there are items that should be taken with you — an empty glass back to the kitchen, a magazine or toy to be stored elsewhere.



- Have your family help. Get them in the habit of picking up after themselves. Make it easy for them to put things away. Do not nag, but do be persistent.
- Create more storage space if that's what is needed. Install shelves in the utility room, basement, the closets or the kids' bedrooms to make more storage space.
- Watch for sales on attractive storage boxes and bins. Use the space under beds to store seasonal or seldom-used items in an under-bed storage box. Buy see-through boxes for storing multiple items so that you can see what is inside.
- Label storage boxes, storage envelopes and folders. This will help you get things into the right places quickly and eliminate having to look through items in an unlabeled box.

Information written by:

*Marilyn Bode, Extension Housing Specialist,
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Basic Home Management Evaluation

– Instrument to be administered before classes –

Please answer the following questions. Your name will not be attached to this piece of paper or to your answers in any way. Confidentiality will be respected at all times. The information you share with us will help us evaluate, develop and deliver Extension Family and Consumer Sciences programs more effectively. Please use a ✓ or ✗ or fill in the best answer for each line.

Evaluating My Need to Know More About Home Maintenance

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>How important is it for me to know more about ...</i>	Not Important At All	Not Important	Maybe	Important	Very Important
Keeping the bathroom clean?					
Keeping the kitchen clean?					
Keeping the living areas and bedrooms clean?					
Reducing clutter throughout the house?					
Maintaining the furnace and air conditioner?					



– Instrument to be administered before classes –

My Plan for Improving My Skills

CLEANING THE BATHROOM

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in keeping the bathroom clean.
 Yes No

2. My goals for improvement in the areas of cleaning the bathroom:
(please check all that apply)
 - Learning cleaning techniques
 - Learning which cleaners to use
 - Learn how to make a schedule for cleaning
 - Learn how to teach my children how to clean the bathroom
 - Other *(please write in)* _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____
(date)

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:
 - Attending classes or workshops
 - Reading publications
 - Other *(please write in)* _____

5. My plan for implementing my goals for cleaning the bathroom includes:
 - Making a cleaning schedule
 - Buying cleaning supplies
 - Setting aside time each week to clean
 - Teaching my children how to clean the bathroom
 - Other *(please write in)* _____



My Plan for Improving My Skills

CLEANING THE KITCHEN

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in keeping the kitchen clean.
 Yes No

2. My goals for improvement in the areas of cleaning the kitchen:
(please check all that apply)
 - Learning how to clean the sink
 - Learning how to clean the refrigerator
 - Learning how to clean the stove and oven
 - Learning how to clean the floors
 - Learning which cleaners to use
 - Learn how to make a schedule for cleaning
 - Other *(please write in)* _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____
(date)

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:
 - Attending classes or workshops
 - Reading publications
 - Other *(please write in)* _____

5. My plan for implementing my goals for cleaning the kitchen includes:
 - Making a cleaning schedule
 - Buying cleaning supplies
 - Setting aside time each day for daily cleaning and each week for more thorough cleaning
 - Cleaning major appliances as needed
 - Other *(please write in)* _____



My Plan for Improving My Skills

CLEANING THE LIVING AREAS AND BEDROOMS

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in cleaning living areas and bedrooms.
 Yes No

2. My goals for improvement in the areas of cleaning the living areas and bedrooms: *(please check all that apply)*
 - Learning how to clean the floors
 - Learning how to clean windows and mirrors
 - Learning which cleaners to use
 - Learn how to make a schedule for cleaning
 - Other *(please write in)* _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____
(date)

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:
 - Attending classes or workshops
 - Reading publications
 - Other *(please write in)* _____

5. My plan for implementing my goals for cleaning the living areas and bedrooms includes:
 - Making a cleaning schedule
 - Buying cleaning supplies
 - Setting aside time each week for cleaning
 - Other *(please write in)* _____



My Plan for Improving My Skills

CONTROLLING CLUTTER

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in controlling clutter.

- Yes No

2. My goals for improvement in the areas of clutter control:
(please check all that apply)

- Learning how to control paper clutter (mail, children's papers, important papers, catalogs and magazines)
- Learning how to control clutter in clothes closets
- Learning how to control clutter in my children's bedrooms and playrooms
- Other *(please write in)* _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____

(date)

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:

- Attending classes or workshops
- Reading publications
- Other *(please write in)* _____

5. My plan for implementing my goals for controlling clutter includes:

- Buy storage containers for storing out-of-season and unused items
- Setting up a system for dealing with mail, children's papers, important papers, catalogs and magazines
- Discarding unneeded items by throwing them away, recycling them or giving them away
- Going through closets twice a year to store out-of-season garments and make decisions about getting rid of unneeded items
- Make/buy containers and shelves for children's toys and supplies
- Teach children how to pick up after themselves
- Make storage of children's clothes easy for the child to reach
- Sort children's possessions twice a year and get rid of outgrown and unused items.
- Other *(please write in)* _____



My Plan for Improving My Skills

MAINTAINING THE FURNACE AND AIR CONDITIONER

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in maintaining the furnace and air conditioner.

Yes No

2. My goals for improvement in the areas of maintenance:
(please check all that apply)

Learning how to change the furnace filter

Learning how to maintain the window air conditioner

Learning how to maintain the central air conditioner

Other (please write in) _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____

(date)

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:

Attending classes or workshops

Reading publications

Other (please write in) _____

5. My plan for implementing my goals for cleaning the living areas and bedrooms includes:

Replace furnace filters regularly

Clean the filter in the window air conditioner at the beginning of the summer

Store the window air conditioner properly during the winter

Clean the central air conditioning unit in the spring before turning it on for the summer

Every other year, call a maintenance person to check if these appliances are running properly

Other (please write in) _____



Basic Home Management Evaluation, cont'd

– Instrument to be administered following classes –

Evaluating My Progress Toward Meeting My Goals

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Progress I have made toward accomplishing my goals in these areas ...</i>	I Do Not Plan to Improve	I Plan to Improve	I Am Improving Somewhat	I Am Improving Well	I Have Improved
Managing my time to keep the house clean					
Purchasing cleaners to use on surfaces in the house					
Establishing a regular schedule for seasonal tasks such as sorting clothes, washing windows, etc.					
Establishing a system for keeping track of important papers and reducing the volume of paper clutter					
Creating convenient storage for children's toys and clothes					
Helping my children establish good habits for cleaning up their rooms and helping with household cleaning					
Maintaining my furnace and air conditioner so they run efficiently					



Basic Home Management Evaluation, cont'd

– Instrument to be administered following classes
and at 6- and 12-month follow-ups –

An Assessment of How My Home Maintenance Activities Affect My Family's Health and Well-Being

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>How often does the following occur?</i>	Never	Sometimes	About 1/2 of the Time	Often	Always
Our home is clean and healthy for my family					
Few things get lost in my home					
I feel able to manage household cleaning chores					
My children are picking up and cleaning up after themselves					
My appliances, including the furnace and air conditioner, receive regular cleaning and maintenance					

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